

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-20 (cancelled)

21. (New) A steering wheel mounting hub comprising:
a plastic frustum-shaped body having a generally planar upper surface of a predetermined first diameter and an opposed generally planar lower surface of a predetermined second diameter larger than the first diameter;
at least two apertures formed in said upper surface for attaching a steering wheel thereto, said at least two apertures not extending to said lower surface;
a recess formed in said upper surface and not extending to said lower surface, said recess and said at least two apertures opening in a common plane of said upper surface;
and
a mounting bore extending through said body open to said recess and said lower surface, said bore defining an inner surface and being adapted to receive an end of a steering shaft whereby said mounting bore prevents the end of the steering shaft from extending above said common plane.
22. (New) The steering wheel mounting hub according to Claim 21 wherein said at least two apertures are adapted to receive self-tapping threaded fasteners.
23. (New) The steering wheel mounting hub according to Claim 21 wherein said inner surface has a star-shaped profile having no more than six points.
24. (New) The steering wheel mounting hub according to Claim 23 wherein said star-shaped profile is formed by a plurality of V-shaped grooves.
25. (New) The steering wheel mounting hub according to Claim 21 wherein said inner surface has a cylindrical profile with a plurality of radially outwardly extending grooves.

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26. (New) The steering wheel mounting hub according to Claim 25 wherein said grooves are rectangular in profile.

27. (New) The steering wheel mounting hub according to Claim 21 wherein said recess is adapted to receive a steering shaft nut.

28. (New) The steering wheel mounting hub according to Claim 21 including an annular recess formed in said lower surface between a central boss and an outer wall of said body.

29. (New) The steering wheel mounting hub according to Claim 28 including a plurality of radially extending ribs connected between said central boss and said outer wall dividing said annular recess into a plurality of segments.

30. (New) The steering wheel mounting hub according to Claim 29 wherein each said segment has an associated slot formed in a bottom wall of said recess.

31. (New) The steering wheel mounting hub according to Claim 21 wherein said body is formed of a reinforced plastic material.

32. (New) A steering wheel mounting hub comprising:

a plastic frustum-shaped body having a generally planar upper surface of a predetermined first diameter and an opposed generally planar lower surface of a predetermined second diameter larger than the first diameter;

a plurality of fastener apertures formed in said body at said upper surface for receiving fastening means to attach a steering wheel to said upper surface, said fastener apertures not extending to said lower surface;

a central recess formed in said body at said upper surface for receiving a steering wheel retaining nut, said central recess and said fastener apertures opening in a common plane at said upper surface; and

a mounting bore formed through said body and centered on a longitudinal axis of said body, said bore extending from said central recess to said lower surface and being tapered to receive an end of a steering shaft whereby said mounting bore prevents an end of a steering shaft from extending above said common plane.

33. (New) The steering wheel mounting hub according to Claim 32 wherein said fastener apertures are adapted to receive self-tapping threaded fasteners.

34. (New) The steering wheel mounting hub according to Claim 32 wherein said mounting bore has an inner surface with a star-shaped profile having no more than six points.

35. (New) The steering wheel mounting hub according to Claim 34 wherein said star-shaped profile is formed by a plurality of V-shaped grooves.

36. (New) The steering wheel mounting hub according to Claim 32 wherein said mounting bore has an inner surface with a cylindrical profile and a plurality of radially outwardly extending grooves.

37. (New) The steering wheel mounting hub according to Claim 32 including an annular recess formed in said lower surface between a central boss and an outer wall of said body.

38. (New) The steering wheel mounting hub according to Claim 37 including a plurality of radially extending ribs connected between said central boss and said outer wall dividing said annular recess into a plurality of segments.

39. (New) The steering wheel mounting hub according to Claim 38 wherein each said segment has an associated slot formed in a bottom wall of said recess.

40. (New) A steering wheel assembly comprising:

a steering wheel having a center disk with a plurality of mounting apertures formed therein;

a plurality of fasteners;

a retaining nut; and

a mounting hub having a plastic frustum-shaped body with a generally planar upper surface of a predetermined first diameter and an opposed generally planar lower surface of a predetermined second diameter larger than the first diameter, a plurality of fastener apertures formed in said body at said upper surface and retaining said plurality of fasteners, a central recess formed in said body open to said upper surface for receiving said retaining nut, said central recess and said fastener apertures opening in a common plane, and a mounting bore formed in said body extending from a bottom wall of said recess to said lower surface and being tapered to receive a steering shaft whereby when a threaded upper end of a steering shaft is inserted in said mounting bore, said retaining nut is received in said central recess and threadably engages the upper end of the steering shaft and each of said fasteners is extended through one of said mounting apertures and engages one of said fastener apertures for retaining said center disk against said upper surface of said mounting hub and covering said retaining nut.